

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, MASS, TU, GR, US

SUBJ: VIEWS OF SENATOR INAN ON U.S.-TURKEY-GREECE RELATIONS

REF: ANKARA 5943

1. I HAD A DISCOURAGING TALK AUGUST 11 WITH SENATOR KAMRAN INAN, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TURK SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, WHO HAD RECENTLY RETURNED TO ANKARA AFTER AN EXTENDED EFFORT IN WASHINGTON TO CONVINCE THE CONGRESS TO REVERSE ITS EMBARGO LEGISLATION. I FOUND INAN IN AN EVEN MORE NEGATIVE AND BELLIGERENT MOOD THAN INDICATED BY PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING. HE HAD CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT THE US CONGRESS HAD REACHED THE POINT WHERE IT HAD NO REAL UNDERSTANDING OF FREE WORLD SECURITY NEEDS AND THAT BECAUSE OF ITS IRRESPONSIBLE ATTITUDES, NATO COULD NO LONGER BE COUNTED ON TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

2. IT WAS NOT JUST THE CONGRESS WHOSE IRRESPONSIBILITY HE DESCRIBED IN SUCH BLACK AND WHITE TERMS. THE ISRAELI LOBBY, HE ASSERTED, HAD TRIED TO PLAY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUE DESPITE THE FACT THAT ISRAEL WOULD SURELY PAY A GRAVE PRICE IN THE AFTERMATH OF A WEAKENING OF AMERICAN POWER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. HE
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ALSO COMMENTED BITTERLY THAT MEN LIKE GEORGE BALL, CY VANCE AND

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT HAD HELPED PRODUCE THE HOUSE RESULT ON JULY 24 AND THESE WERE NOT GREEN CONGRESSMENT BUT EXPERIENCED AMERICAN FIGURES WHO KNEW THE REAL SITUATION IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. IT ALL ADDED UP, SAID INAN, TO THE FACT THAT AMERICA COULD NO LONGER BE TRUSTED AND THIS WAS THE MESSAGE THAT HAD CARRIED TO PRESIDENT KORUTURK, PRIMIN DEMIERL, FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL AND TO OTHER LEADERS OF BOTH MAJOR PARTIES. HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THIS LATTER VIEW NOT NOW SIMPLY BE PUT FORWARD BY THE EXTREME LEFT AND EXTREME RIGHT AND HE WAS ORGANIZING A SEMINAR FOR MODERATES TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT LATER THIS MONTH.

3. INAN'S SECOND MAIN THEME WAS THAT THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL STANCE IS IN THE END LIKELY TO PRECIPITATE A GREEK-TURKISH WAR IN THE AEGEAN. HIS REASONING WAS THAT THE GREEKS ARE GETTING "CRAZY", BOTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR CONFIDENCE AND THEIR AMBITIONS. HE SEES A SINISTER GREEK-BULGARIAN ALLIANCE AGAINST TURKEY, AND HE ARGUED THAT AT THE MOMENT, AS THE EMBARGO BRINGS TURKISH AIR STRENGTH DOWN BELOW THAT OF THE GREEKS, THE LATTER MAY WELL "TAKE AN INSANE ACTION" IN THE AEGEAN. HE ADDED THAT IF THE TURK LEADERSHIP BECOMES CONVINCED THAT THIS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY, A TURK PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM BEFORE THE GREEKS HAD A CHANCE TO START IT COULD NOT ALL BE RULED OUT. THUS IF CONGRESS RETAINED THE EMBARGO (AS HE EXPECTS IT WILL) HE THOUGHT IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH PUT THE SAME LICENSE RESTRICTIONS ON GREECE THAT PRESENTLY APPLY TO TURKEY. WITHOUT THIS PARALLEL APPROACH, HE GLOOMILY PREDICTED, A GREEK-TURK WAR IN THE AEGEAN WAS LIKELY.

4. COMMENT: INAN IS A MAN WHOSE MANY YEARS OF DEFENDING THE AMERICAN-TURKISH ALLIANCE AND TURKISH-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN NATO LEAVE HIM FEELING PARTICULARLY LET DOWN BY THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS. IN ADDITION, HIS BEING ON HAND TO HEAR THE VITUPERATION LEVELED AT TURKEY IN RECENT CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES HAS ALSO LEFT ITS MARK. KNOWN TO HAVE A CAPABILITY FOR OVERSTATEMENT, HE NEVERTHELESS IS A FIGURE WITH SOME IMPACT HERE AND HIS DEFECTION AND DISENCHANTMENT ARE NOT GOING TO BE HELPFUL TO US.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE AEGEAN, WHILE I DO NOT ACCEPT SOME OF INAN'S MORE FLAMBOYANT REASONING, I, TOO, HAVE BEEN TROUBLED FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME TIME OVER THE POSSIBILITY THAT A SUSTAINED EMBARGO COULD EVENTUALLY PRODUCE AN AEGEAN CONFRONTATION, PARTICULARLY AS TURKEY NEARS THE POINT WHERE ITS SUPERIORITY IN THE AIR IS THREATENED. FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, A PRESENT WEIGHING OF THE RELEVANT INDICATORS DOES NOT SUGGEST THIS TO BE AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM. IN FACT, SINCE THE CARMANALIS-DEMIREL MEETING THE AEGEAN SITUATION HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY CALMER THAN IT WAS EARLIER THIS SPRING.

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